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BOTTLING FRUIT JUICES

Preparing the Fruit

Pick over the fruit carefully, and then wash it thoroughly by one of the following methods:

No. 1 Place the fruit in a wire basket or colander and wash with a light spray of water until the water runs clean

or

No. 2 Place the fruit in a bowl of water and then lift it out gently to another bowl of water, using the fingers as a sieve. This should be done two or three times until there is no dirt or sand in the bottom of the bowl. (Do not let the fruit stand in the water).

Extracting Juices from Berries and Other Small Fruits

Mash a small portion of the washed fruit in a kettle and then stir while heating it quickly just to the boiling point. Remove at once from the fire. (It is important not to allow the fruit to boil because this spoils the flavor of the juice. Heating softens the framework of the fruit and makes the yield of clear juice greater than is obtained from raw fruit. Heating at a low temperature has the further advantage of retaining the color and flavor).

Strain the heated juice through a heavy jelly bag. The juice that runs from the bag without pressure is called "free" juice. This is generally clearer than juice obtained by pressure. It may be bottled separately or mixed with the juice extracted under pressure.

In extracting from the less juicy fruits, a little longer cooking at the simmering point is required, and a small amount of water is needed, - about 1/4 cup to 1 pound of fruit.

Sweetening

Sugar may be added in the proportion of 1 cup to a gallon of juice. The sugar helps to retain the color and improves the flavor of the juice, but is not necessary for preservation. When used, it should be added to the strained juice and dissolved by stirring just before the juice is reheated for bottling.

Bottling

After the juice is strained and the sugar added, reheat to the simmering point (185° F. or 85° C.). If a thermometer is not available, heat the juice in a covered double boiler for about 10 minutes (or until thoroughly heated through). Pour the hot juice into hot sterilized bottles, filling

to within one inch from the top to allow for expansion if crown caps are used for sealing, or two inches if corks are used.

Bottles must be sealed tight before they are processed. A good grade of bottle cap is very satisfactory and is easy to seal by clamping it on securely with the aid of a simple, inexpensive device. If corks are used, the cork should be pushed in tightly and made safe by placing a double square of cheesecloth over it and tying this down with a string around the neck of the bottle below the collar. The cap-sealed, or tightly-corked bottles of juice are then ready to process.

If small quantities of juice are desired at one time, it is well to use small bottles, since spoilage is likely to occur after opening even if the juice is kept for only a few days.

Processing

Place the sealed bottles in a rack or on a false bottom in a large container of warm water on the stove. It is best to lay the bottles on their sides, not more than three layers deep and not crowded in the container. There should be sufficient water to come at least two inches over the top layer of bottles. Heat the water to the simmering point (185° F. or 85° C.) and hold at this temperature for 10 minutes. (Boiling spoils the flavor and is not necessary for the sterilization of fruit juices). Remove at once and allow to cool.

Storing

If corks are used, dip the cork and top of the bottle in semi-liquid paraffin or sealing wax. Caps that have been clamped on securely before processing need no further attention. The bottles of sealed juice should be labeled and stored in a cool, dark, dry place.

Additional information on bottling juices is found in Farmers' Bulletin 1075, "Unfermented Grape Juice", and Farmers' Bulletin 1264, "Manufacture of Unfermented Apple Juice".
